



*State parks offer opportunity to observe the bald eagle, our magnificent national symbol, during weekends in January.*

## Alabama's Bald Eagle Restoration: A Success Story

**T**he numbers tell the story. In the past 15 years since bald eagles began re-nesting in Alabama, there have been 209 nesting attempts with 214 young eagles successfully "fledging" or leaving these nests. This recovery of the bald eagle in Alabama, and indeed nationally, has been one of the most remarkable success stories in wildlife management.

Amazingly, prior to 1987 there were no known bald eagle nests in Alabama. None. Alabama lost its nesting bald eagles when they declined sharply nationwide in the 1950s and 60s. As eagle numbers recovered, a few would over-winter in our state, but these birds migrated north to nest each spring. They were not "imprinted" upon Alabama for their nesting behavior. Bald eagles have a strong tendency to return to the vicinity where they learned to fly when they are ready to mate and raise their own young. This

occurs when they are four or five years old.

In an effort to restore a nesting population of eagles in the state, a total of 91 young eaglets were "hacked" and released each spring from 1985 through 1991 through the Alabama Non-game Wildlife Program. Hacking is a process that simulates natural nest conditions and provides releases with a minimum of human exposure.

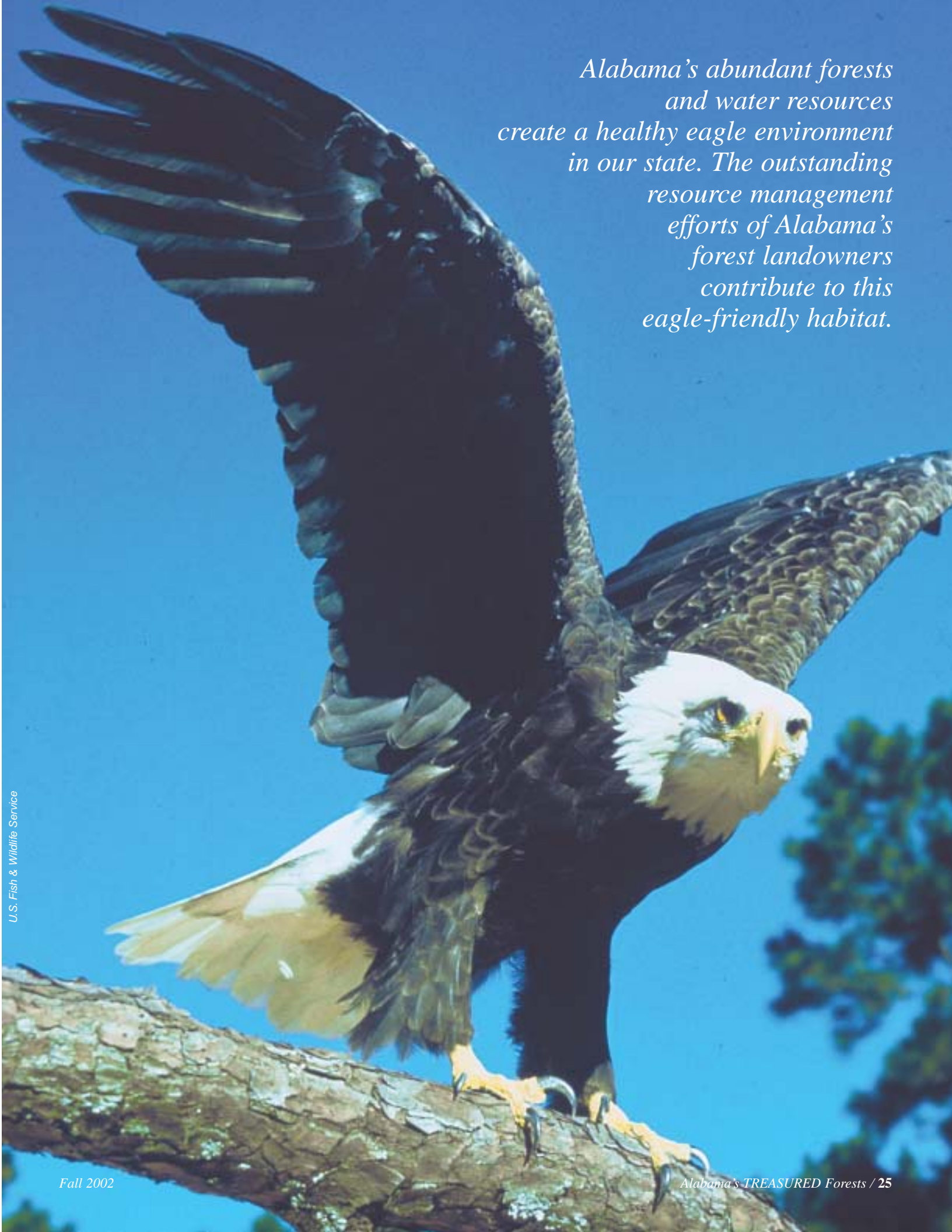
There are now 35 nests across the state. What a remarkable story! The recovery of the bald eagle will go alongside the modern wildlife management success stories of the white-tailed deer, the Eastern wild turkey, the wood duck, and the Eastern bluebird. It is a demonstration of what dedicated conservationists, with adequate resources, can accomplish.

The majestic bald eagle is a regular visitor and attraction at Lake Guntersville

State Park and the Tennessee Valley. They usually begin to arrive in November and spend the winter months in and around the park soaring the skies, fishing the reservoir, and roosting in the tall pines along the mountain tops.

Lake Guntersville and Joe Wheeler State Parks will host "Eagle Awareness 2003" during weekends throughout the month of January. This annual event which is open to the public will include a field trip to view eagles leaving the roost site, field trips to view eagles during the day, and a bird seminar highlighting various birds of prey.

Eagle Awareness dates are January 10-12, 17-19, and 24-26 for Lake Guntersville and January 31-February 2 for Joe Wheeler State Park. For more information or lodging package reservations, call 1-800-548-4553 or 1-800-ALA-PARK. 🦅

A bald eagle is perched on a thick, textured tree branch. Its wings are spread wide, showing the intricate patterns of its feathers. The eagle's head is turned slightly to the right, revealing its white plumage and sharp yellow beak. The background is a clear, vibrant blue sky, with some green foliage visible in the lower right corner.

*Alabama's abundant forests  
and water resources  
create a healthy eagle environment  
in our state. The outstanding  
resource management  
efforts of Alabama's  
forest landowners  
contribute to this  
eagle-friendly habitat.*